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Europäisches Patentamt  
European Patent Office  
Office européen des brevets



(11) Publication number:

**0 384 534 B1**

(2)

# EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(43)

Date of publication of patent specification: 17.05.95 (51) Int. Cl.<sup>8</sup>: C12P 19/44, //(C12P19/44,

C12R1:38)

(57)

Application number: 90200393.8

(62)

Date of filing: 20.02.90

(54)

A process for the fermentative oxidation of reducing disaccharides.

(52)

Priority: 21.02.89 NL 8900420

(43)

Date of publication of application:  
29.08.90 Bulletin 90/35

(43)

Publication of the grant of the patent:  
17.05.95 Bulletin 95/20

(64)

Designated Contracting States:  
AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IT LI LU NL SE

(68)

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## Description

The present invention relates to the fermentative oxidation of reducing disaccharides, such as maltose and lactose, using the microorganism *Pseudomonas cepacia*. By the oxidation of these disaccharides aldobionic acids, such as maltobionic acid, or lactobionic acid, or their salts can be prepared.

US patent 3,899,604 discloses the use of maltobionic acid as a nutrient acid. Maltobionic acid has a mildly sour flavour and also contributes to the viscosity of food products in which it is contained. Furthermore, maltobionic acid may enhance the natural smell and taste of certain food products (flavour improver) as described in US patent 3,829,583.

In Chemical Abstracts, vol. 42, no.6, 1948, col. 1983h + 1984b there is reported on the oxidation of lactose and maltose to bionic acids by *Pseudomonas* microorganisms. In both cases *Pseudomonas graveolens* performed the oxidation at the highest rate.

Chemical Abstracts, vol. 74, no.25, 1971, abstract no. 142296c describes the oxidation of non-isomerized lactose with lactose dehydrogenase to give lactobionic acid. *Pseudomonas graveolens* is used for producing the dehydrogenase.

US patent 3,862,005 discloses a process for the fermentative oxidation of disaccharides to aldobionic acids by means of the microorganism *Pseudomonas graveolens* or *Pseudomonas fragi*. The process is explicitly described for the conversion of maltose into maltobionic acid. This process comprises, among others, the following three steps, namely the growth of the microorganism (growth phase), the separation of the grown cells from the growth medium (separation step), and the oxidation of the disaccharides by means of enzymes present in the cell material (production phase). A disadvantage of this process is the necessity of separating the cell material from the growth medium before starting the production phase in another medium. This is a result of the fact that during the growth phase, too, said microorganisms use the disaccharide (e.g., maltose) as a carbon and energy source.

The present invention relates to the fermentative oxidation of aldobionic acids, such as maltobionic acid or lactobionic acid, by means of the microorganism *Pseudomonas cepacia*. This process consists essentially of 2 phases, namely the growth phase and the production phase. The growth medium comprises different mineral substances necessary for the growth of the microorganism and further a carbon and energy source (e.g., glucose) and a reducing disaccharide (e.g., maltose or lactose). In the growth phase substantially cell material (biomass) is formed by conversion of the glucose, said cell material comprising the enzyme dehydrogenase, which catalyses the formation of aldobionic acid. During the growth phase the disaccharides present are not used as a carbon source. These disaccharides induce the dehydrogenase, resulting in that in the growth phase the formation of aldobionic acid already takes place to a limited extent.

After sufficient cell material has been formed in the fermenter during the growth phase, the production phase is carried out in the same fermenter without the necessity of first separating the cell material. For this purpose, an additional dose of disaccharide (e.g., maltose or lactose) is added to the fermentation medium. Moreover, an additional amount of carbon source (e.g., glucose and/or yeast extract) is added to the fermentation medium to prevent a strong deterioration of the amount of active cell material in the fermenter during the production phase. During the production phase the disaccharide is converted almost exclusively into the corresponding aldobionic acid or a salt thereof. Suitable microorganism, capable of being used according to the invention are the strains *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 659.88 and *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 658.88, both deposited with the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures of Baarn, the Netherlands, on October 26, 1988.

The fermentation conditions may vary within wide limits. The fermentation temperature preferably ranges from 20 to 50 °C. The pH of the fermentation medium preferably ranges from 5 to 8. During the fermentation the pH of the fermentation medium is kept approximately neutral, preferably by addition (titration) of aqueous alkaline solutions, e.g., of NaOH or KOH. The fermentation medium is preferably stirred and aerated. The disaccharides to be converted may be added in pure form. However, there can also be used products rich in the relevant disaccharide, such as maltose syrups or starch hydrolysates which contain relatively much maltose. The duration of the fermentation depends on, among others, the amount of biomass formed, the composition of the fermentation medium and the fermentation conditions. The fermentation may be terminated by removal of the cell material from the fermentation medium, e.g., by filtration. The resulting oxidation efficiencies (mole of disaccharide employed calculated on mole of aldobionic acid produced) may amount to approximately 70 to 95%. The inventive process is, in particular, suitable for the preparation of maltobionic acid or salts thereof from maltose-containing substrates and for the preparation of lactobionic acid or salts thereof from lactose-containing substrates. The invention will be explained with reference to the following examples.

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## Example 1

In a laboratory fermenter (capacity 2 l; makers Applikon) a growth medium was composed which consisted of the following components:

Distilled water	700 ml
$(\text{H}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$	2.8 g
$\text{K}_2\text{HPO}_4$	0.98 g
$\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$	0.14 g
Trace solution	3.5 ml

The trace solution contains the following components:

$\text{FeCl}_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$	2 g/l
$\text{H}_3\text{BO}_3$	0.05 g/l
$\text{ZnCl}_2$	0.05 g/l
$\text{CuCl}_2$	0.03 g/l
$\text{MnCl}_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$	0.5 g/l
$(\text{NH}_4)_6\text{Mo}_7\text{O}_{24} \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$	0.05 g/l
$\text{AlCl}_3$	0.5 g/l
$\text{CoCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$	0.05 g/l
$\text{NiCl}_2$	0.05 g/l
EDTA	0.5 g/l
HCl (concentrated)	1 ml/l

This growth medium was sterilized for 20 minutes at 120°C. Then separately sterilized aqueous solutions of 8 g glucose and 2 g maltose were added. After cooling to the fermentation temperature of 30°C the pH of the medium was adjusted to pH 7 with an aqueous KOH solution. The whole was inoculated with 100 ml preculture of *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 659.88, cultured in an Erlenmeyer on the same medium as the main culture. During the growth phase, aeration was effected at a rate of 40 l/h. After sufficient cell material was formed in the growth phase, a total of 300 ml of an aqueous maltose/glucose solution (maltose content 350 g/l; glucose content 20 g/l) was added in 3 equal portions. During the production phase the aeration was increased to 60 l/h. During the whole fermentation titration was effected with an aqueous solution of KOH to maintain the pH of the medium at about 7. The fermentation was terminated 48 hours after addition of the maltose/glucose solution. At that moment approximately 95% by weight of the added maltose had been converted into maltobionic acid. The cell material was removed from the reaction mixture by centrifugation. To the supernatant were then added 1 g/l filtration aid ("Dicalite"®) and 4 g/l activated carbon ("Norit SX 2"®). After 1 hour conditioning at 40°C the reaction mixture was filtered over a paper filter.

The clear liquid was thickened by evaporation ("Rotavapor"®) to 69% by weight dry substance (70° Brix). Analysis with thin-layer chromatography showed that the worked-up reaction mixture contained only maltobionic acid and maltose.

## Example 2

In the laboratory fermenter of Example 1, 100 g maltose were dissolved in 700 ml distilled water. After the pH of the solution was adjusted to 3, the whole was sterilized for 20 minutes at 110°C. Then 500 ml of a sterilized aqueous solution were added which contained the following growth components:



### Patentansprüche

1. Ein Verfahren zur fermentativen Oxidation von reduzierenden Disacchariden zu Aldobionsäuren, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Fermentationsmedium, welches ein reduzierenden Disaccharid und Wachstumsbestandteile enthält, unter aeroben Bedingungen mit Zellmaterial behandelt wird, das durch Ziehen von zur Gattung *Pseudomonas cepacia* gehörenden Mikroorganismen erhalten wird, ohne daß das Zellmaterial vom Wachstumsmedium, in dem es gebildet wurde, getrennt wird.
2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Zellmaterial erhalten wird durch Ziehen des Stamms *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 659.88.
3. Ein Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Zellmaterial erhalten ist durch Ziehen des Stamms *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 659.88.
4. Ein Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 bis 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß Maltobionsäure oder deren Salze durch fermentative Oxidation von Maltose enthaltenden Substraten hergestellt werden.
5. Ein Verfahren nach Ansprüchen 1 bis 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß Lactobionsäure oder deren Salze durch fermentative Oxidation von Lactose enthaltenden Substraten hergestellt werden.

### Revendications

1. Procédé d'oxydation fermentative de disaccharides réducteurs en acides aldobioniques, caractérisé en ce qu'un milieu de fermentation contenant un disaccharide réducteur et des éléments de croissance est traité dans des conditions aérobies avec un matériau cellulaire obtenu par la croissance de micro-organismes appartenant à l'espèce *Pseudomonas cepacia* sans séparer le matériau cellulaire du milieu de croissance dans lequel il a été produit.
2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que le matériau cellulaire est obtenu par la croissance de la souche *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 659.88.
3. Procédé selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que le matériau cellulaire est obtenu par la croissance de la souche *Pseudomonas cepacia* CBS 658.88.
4. Procédé selon les revendications 1 à 3, caractérisé en ce que l'acide maltobionique ou des sels de celui-ci sont préparés par l'oxydation fermentative de substrats contenant du maltose.
5. Procédé selon l'une des revendications 1 à 3, caractérisé en ce que l'acide lactobionique ou des sels de celui-ci sont préparés par l'oxydation fermentative de substrats contenant du lactose.